MCCC NEWS

Mid-Cities Commodore Club, Inc.

December 85 Vol. 3 Issue 12

LARRY GROEBE

TWO OR THREE THINGS I KNOW ABOUT HER

For computer owners, the Amiga is perhaps the greatest jigsaw puzzle ever sold.

It's a mystery machine that tantalizes, and teases, and more than occasionally, frustrates. The machine is SO powerful, and has SO many features in SO many areas, and has SO little documentation, that even though the first owners around the metroplex have had their computers for more than a month, they probably have more questions now than when they started. Here then, a sampling of random facts, tips, thoughts, and warnings about the most sophisticated computer made for under $2000.

1) The Amiga is wonderful. One example: AmigaBasiC runs the Sieve of Erastothanes (BYTE magazine's standard test of calculation power) 30% FASTER than the IBM-PC-AT.

2) AmigaBasiC is **NOT** wonderful. Yes, it is fast. On the other hand, it has (as one person put it) a "bottom-pit-in hell" line editor that harkens back to the days of the TRS-80 Model 1. It is also missing statements: things like TIME$ and the ability to handle the RS232 port.

3) AmigaBasiC graphics are superb. You simply wont believe the kinds of things you can do in plain vanilla, uncompiled BASIC. One example: you can write a program that can nearly rival the Koalpad Illustrator on the C64 for speed and power...**IN BASIC.**

4) The Amiga's documentation is woefully insufficient. This $1300 computer comes with one really nice notebook a couple of inches thick, and you get all excited and think to yourself all the secrets of the machine will soon be yours. Wrong. Half an inch is devoted to moving Icons around the screen, and the other two inches are devoted to a reference guide to ABasiC. Plus there are these addendums which say things like: "The ANIMATE command on your copy of ABASIC may not yet be implemented" and "The Guided Tour of the Amiga program that is supposed to be on the EXTRAS disk is not finished yet. Check your dealer."

5) The CLI is - well, who knows? There's no documentation... What's a CLI? That's the operating system command line interface, which looks and works rather like traditional MS-DOS, with enhancements. At least **I THINK** there are enhancements... maybe when somebody writes a book about it...

6) The computer's internal structure is astounding. There will be no extensive memory maps published; as one giddy phrase in one of the developer's manuals says, "The design philosophy...is that there is only one hard-coded address in the system."

Cont'd on page 3

MCCC 3rd ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER

Saturday, Dec. 21 - 1:30 PM
Brookside Center, Hurst

Bring computers & software.
Refreshments

The MID- CITIES COMMODORE CLUB is a non- profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school and in business. Appropriate and legal use of all types of software is encouraged by this club.

The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines Ltd. or Commodore Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC and C64) are registered trademarks of Commodore Inc.

Our meetings are open to all. Yearly membership dues are $20.00 and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC NEWS, the club newsletter, library copying privileges, attendance at any or all chapter and club meetings as well as participation in club-sponsored classes. Dues are paid on a calendar year basis and new members who join after March 31 of each year pay prorated dues for the months remaining.

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COMMERCIAL RATES are as follows: $60.00 per full page ad, $30.00 per half page ad, $20.00 per quarter page ad and $10.00 per business card. Non-members will pay commercial rates.

The deadline for submissions to the MCCC NEWS is the third Saturday of each month. PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY CAMERA-READY AD COPY. Make all checks payable to Mid-Cities Commodore Club and mail to MCCC NEWS, P.O. Box 1578, Bedford, Texas 76021.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

MEETINGS

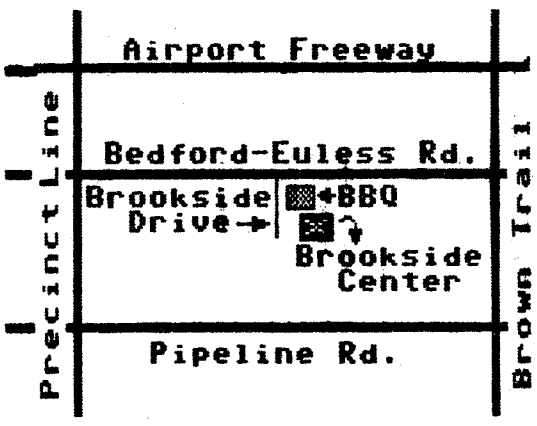
Dec. 14 GRAND PRAIRIE CHAPTER 1:30 PM
G. P. Public Library

ARLINGTON CHAPTER 10:00 AM
Downtown Arlington Library

Dec. 21 MCCC CHRISTMAS MEETING 1:30 PM
Brookside Convention Center
Hurst

Dec. 21 is the NL Deadline for the January Issue.

Jan. 4 Board of Directors Mtg. 10:00 AM
Western Hills Inn



Inside the machine is an elegant and expandable operatating structure with niceties such as fully reassignable system devices. It means that you can pull such tricks as copying files to the serial port to transfer them to another computer; to the speech synthesiser to speak them; or to memory to turn them into a RAMdisk.

Multitasking is seductive. No need to carefully quit each program when you are finished with it - simply load another one in it's own window right on top of it! It doesn't take long to get used to working this way. When this aspect of the machine **REALLY** gets going, we're gonna have some fun. I've seen the Amiga talking on the phone to Startext while jumping betweeen work on a spreadsheet and a word processor in separate windows.

256K of RAM is insufficient. To someone who never ran out of memory on their C64, that statement seems a bit foolhardy. But consider that each graphic screen can take up 32K of memory (lo-res!); consider you can stack many screens on top of each other; consider especially that you can run two or three programs at the same time; - you run out of room pretty quick. 512K is a good minimum for this computer; 1 megabyte of RAM isn't being greedy.

The Amiga is not finshed. Version 1. 1 of the operating system is promised 'Real Soon Now', AmigaBasic has a few bugs; the Manual mentions some of the features of the included NotePad program that will be implemented in later editions. Every so often the system crashes and a big red box pops on screen informing you the system has crashed (as if you couldn't tell) and gives you a "guru meditation number" that you are supposed to report to Commodore/Amiga. Uhuh. After you've seen a dozen of them, you stop taking notes.

The Amiga is indeed a jigsaw puzzle, we haven't **BEGUN** to put together all the pieces. In fact, I'm not sure we even know how many pieces are supposed to be in the puzzle.

But hey - it's going to be fun trying to find out!

Graphics in this newsletter were drawn using Doodle! and The Print Shop. Typestyles were created using FontMaster, a new word processing program by Xetec.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

BILL RAECKE

THE MCCC YEAR IN REVIEW

The end of the year is here. This should be a good time to look back on what has taken place this year and reflect on our strengths, a few of our weaknesses, and look ahead to 1986.

One of the high points of my year as MCCC President was our co-operative effort with SCOPE to bring Jim Butterfield to the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. This was a rare opportunity for members to study and informally chatwith one of the recognized experts on Commodore computers. He turned out to be not only expert, but a very able instructor, interesting speaker, and an all- around good guy. And, thanks to a careful watch on expenses, it cost the club very little. A definite success.

The second high point for me was the creation of our own BBS. This was a rather large effort, (one in which many other clubs have been unsuccessful), but thanks to the dedication of several hard-working officers, it has been very successful thus far. A particular point of pride for me is the fact that the software was written for us by two of our own club members. I have seen many higher-priced terminal programs which do not come near to the quality of this home-grown product.

These two items may stand out as high points in my mind, but I don't want to ignore the ongoing efforts of our officers in just putting things together month after month. If those meetings look easy, try organizing one sometime. And this newsletter should be a source of pride to all club members. It is one of the best publications of it's kind nationally. The success of our club is due exclusively to the efforts of the people who make it happen,both officers and non-officers, who devote their time and energy to making it all work.

The coming year promises to be an even greater challenge. For the past couple of years interest in the VIC 20 has subsided. We have really been a C64 club rather than a Commodore club because virtually all of our members have been C64 owners. With the advent of the C128 and the Amiga that will be changing. We already have many C128 owners in our midst and inteest in the Amiga is shared by many. It will be a challenging year, and although I will not be serving as President, I intend to keep my hand in the activities. It should be fun.

With the continued efforts of our active membership I am sure that we can continue to grow and to improve, and, to accomplish those things that were left undone this year. Again, my thanks to all who made it happen.

PROGRAMMER'S CORNER

By Bob Lawson

As a club officer with the Ft. Worth Night Chapter, I have had numerous occasions to talk to other members both in person and on the club Bulletin Board. I have come to the alarming conclusion that there are many new Commodore owners who are not only interested in software reviews but also in programming techniques and little known programming secrets. We already review many software packages in this newsletter but somewhere along the way, we have neglected the individuals who are interested in learning how to program or have the desire to learn new techniques and secrets. So..., for the next several months, or until I'm run out of town, I will attempt to present some short programming routines which are fascinating to watch and could possibly generate new ideas for improving old routines.

Before I begin this month's installment I would like to take a moment to editorialize a comment I overheard at a recent chapter meeting. The comment was: "We should use a different BBS program than the one written by Aaron Hightower and Craig Smith. The commands are difficult to learn and hardly anyone uses the color graphics feature anyway." Digressing a bit, MULTI-PLAN, THE MANAGER, and VIP TERMINAL are three programs which are used by thousands of Commodore 64 owners worldwide. The features of these programs which have made them so popular are neither easily accessible, nor, does everyone who owns these programs access

and use every available feature. The features are there, however, for those who do wish to use them.

The MCCGMS Bulletin Board Program is such a program. It's true! Not many people use the color graphics feature. But, should the need arise to express something graphically, or, should the saliva glands start acting up until you doodle on the Bulletin Board and create that masterpiece for everyone to see, the feature is there for all of us to use. Suppressing innovation would result in a demise of creativity and possibly computing altogether. I say, "Hats off to these two teenage boys who gave us such a fascinating and powerful program.

You probably wonder why I chose to editorialize at this time. The reason was innovation, and takes us into this month's topic, colors!!! Can anyone tell me how many colors can be displayed by the Commodore 64? Depressing the CTRL key and the numbers 1-8 makes 8 colors and by depressing the C= key and the same number keys 1-8 we have another 8 colors. This makes a total of 16 colors. If 16 was your answer, you were wrong.

Until the recent release of the AMIGA, 16 colors was the accepted standard. The AMIGA purportedly has the capabilityof producing 4096 colors. Hey folks, that's mind boggling. Here's how it's done. Because of the huge memory capability of the AMIGA a series of screens are created and then stacked one on top of the other. This creates a shading effect. Thus, the illusion of 4096 different colors.

But the Commodore 64 does not have this kind of memory capability. Is it possible to do the same thing? Let's prepare a short program for fun...

```
10 POKE 2040,50:POKE 53281,15:
   POKE 53269+23,2
20 PRINT CHR$(147);CHR$(13);CHR$(13);
   CHR$(13)
30 DATA 170,170,170,85,85,85,170,170,170
40 FOR L=0TO63STEP9
50 FORR=3200TO3208:READA
60 POKER+1,A
70 NEXT:RESTORE
80 NEXT
90 POKE53248,170:POKE53249,135:POKE
   53269,1:POKE2041,51
100 FORR=3264TO3327:POKER,255:NEXT
110 POKE53250,170:POKE53251,135:POKE
   53269,3
120 FORB=1TO15
130 POKE53288,B
140 FORL=0TO140
150 POKE53287,L
160 FORR=140TO170STEP.2
170 POKE53250,R
180 NEXT
190 FORG=0TO500
200 NEXT
210 FORR=170TO200
220 POKE53250,R:NEXT
230 FORR=200TO140STEP-.2
240 POKE53250,R:NEXT
250 FORG=0TO500
260 NEXT:NEXT:NEXT
270 END
```

The above routine creates two sprites and then slides one behind the other. If you don't understand what sprites are and the relationship of sprite priorities, I'll attempt to explain. Sprites are simply a dot matrix pattern consisting of 63 pixels (dots) which can be moved around the screen. If two sprites occupy the same location, the sprite having the lower identification number has priority. The second sprite will appear to move behind the first for an illusion of 3 dimensions.

In the above routine, Sprite 1 was created with alternating pixels off. Anything behind it will show through. Sprite 2 was created with all pixels on. Since Sprite 1 is not solid, when Sprite 2 is moved to the same location it appears to move behind it, you can still see Sprite 2.

Using different colors for both sprites a shading effect occurs resulting in a totally different color. By cycling through the 16 basic colors for Sprite 1 and again for Sprite 2, 256 different colors are displayed. The shading subtleties are hard to distinguish on some colors by most people, but they're there. That's right, 256 colors on the Commodore 64.

On that note, I'll leave you adventurous programmers with a small task. Change the pixel patterns of both sprites so that neither is solid and the background color is allowed to show through both sprites. Then add a routine to cycle the 16 basic colors for the background. How many colors can now be displayed? That's right, 4096! My Commodore 64 looks like a better buy every day.

ON-LINE

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ROCKVILLE COMMODORE USERS GROUP

QuantumLink Preview: Among new information services to go on-line recently is QuantumLink, run by Quantum Computer Services, Inc. of Vienna, Va. A joint venture of Control Video Corp. (proprietors of the now defunct Masterline), and Commodore International, many ex-Masterline folks are now running QuantumLink. The network, available evenings and weekends, will initially be dedicated to the C-64 (and C-128 in '64 mode). The original Oct. 1 national debut has been delayed, according to some sources, until January 1, 1986. My preview is based upon on - line demos, log - on attempts, info from QuantumLink managers and technical staffers, and reports from my cohorts, during the firm's beta testing phase.

Three big ideas are supposed to make QuantumLink special. First, ease of use is paramount. The network's own special terminal program simplifies log-ons; after installing your modem type and local phone number on the disk, system access is virtually automatic. You simply load an auto-run program. The special software also enables lively color graphics and split screens. Secondly, the notion of a full featured service is appealing. Therefore, the firm highlights telegaming, communal chats, file transfers, software previews, an on-line encyclopedia, entertainment, news, and the Commodore Information Network. Third, affordability is meant to win your subscription. A flat monthly fee of $9.95 buys unlimited access to standard features plus one hour of supplementary service, more of which costs 6 cents per minute. Absent are sign- up fees, and extra charges for 1200 baud connection or links via intermediate carriers. At first blush, the package sounds terrific.

Unfortunately, QuantumLink fails to live up to expectations, in all three areas. While the special terminal program, a modified PlayNet clone, does facilitate log - on, the program's limitations and quirks are, in my view, devastating. Hardware incompatibilities are a major flaw. Specifically, the code's fast- load routines make it non-functional for MSD drives or other non-1541 beasts that balk at such instructions. In addition, you may use but a single drive, designated as device 8. How about modems? Not all modems, including some listed in the program's own set-up menu, can be used. For example, only selected "Hayes compatible" units will work, but not the Hayes Smartmodem itself, nor the Cat Novation. (Remember that the 1670 is supposed to be Hayes command compatible.) The 1660 only works in manual dial mode. The "Mighty" (sic) Mo is questionable. Interestingly, the firm released the beta test package without having tested the Mitey Mo or Hayes Smartmodem--they didn't even have the units on hand. In response to my inquiry, a QuantumLink technician asked me if the Hayes Smartmodem 300 was Hayes compatible, and if it was made in the U.S.--good grief, that's like asking who was buried in Grant's tomb! Furthermore, the program will not run properly on older, original ROM C-64's; C-128 compatibility is a mystery.

Assuming that QuantumLink embraces your particular combination of computer/ disk drive/modem, your honeymoon with the software is bound to be short, especially if being able to back-up your disk is important. Although the disk is not copy-protected, a duplicate is only good as hazard insurance between on-line sessions. Here's why. Each time you access the service, your disk is automatically interrogated for an ID number (location and contents unknown); once verified, a new code is immediately written to your disk-- the presence of write-protect tabs aborts the log-on. Thus, your back-up with the old code is rendered useless for subsequent calls. (It's like changing the lock on your front door every time you enter your home.) Furthermore, on- line sessions themselves are disk interactive, meaning program modules are loaded for various QuantumLink segments, a time-consuming and sometimes bothersome attribute.

Other constraints also mar the program. Screen colors, regarded by some as garish, are unchangeable. File transfers use a private protocol which is slower than the new Punter routine; prompts lack anti-anxiety status reports (e. g., block by block progress notes), other than a curt transfer - underway

PRINT SHOP ART FROM OTHER CLUBS
MCCC # 277

The following is a visual reference chart of Print Shop graphics gathered from various user groups and individuals for non-Commodore printers.

ALOHA

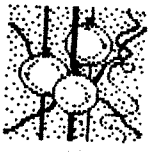
ANCHOR

APPLE

ASTR STAR

BABY

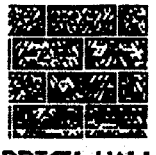
BALL/CHAIN


BALLOONS

BASKET

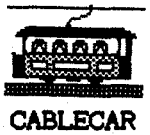
BEER

BOQUET


BRICK WALL

BUTTERFLY

C-64

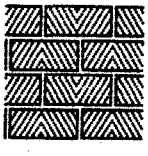

CABLECAR

CAMERA

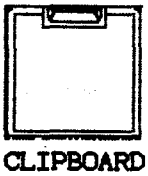
CANDLEABRA

CANDY HEART

CHAMP


CHEVRON WALL

CHEVRON


CLIPBOARD

CROSS

DISK DRIVE

DOG1

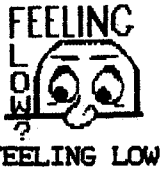
DOLLAR SIGN

DOUGHNUT

DOWN LOAD

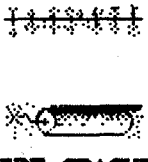
EMPTY CIRCLE

FACE IT



FEELING LOW

FERN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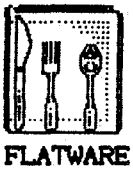
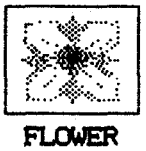

FLATWARE

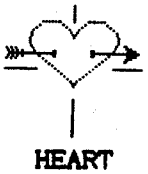
FLOWER2


FLOWER

GOOD DAY

GOOD LUCK

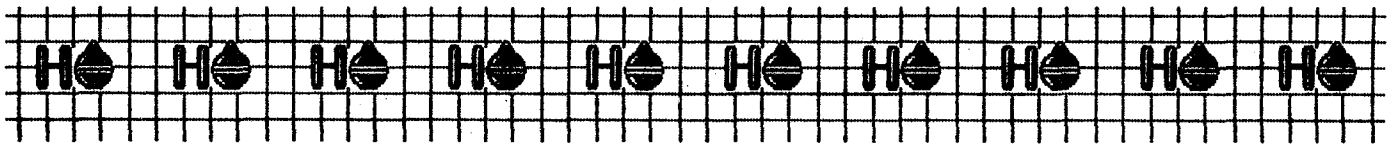
HALF SCREEN

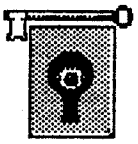

HEART

HORSE HEAD

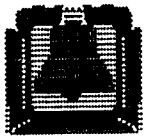
JAVA CUP

KEEP SMILING




KEYHOLE

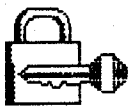
LEAVES


LIBERTY

LIGHTENING

LIGHTHOUSE

LIT


LOCK N KEY

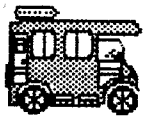
LOVE

MAGIC CARPET

MAGIC LAMP

MASK

MOTORBOAT


MOTORHOME

MUG

MY FIRE

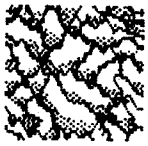
NONO SIGN

NUMBER ONE

OWL1

PAGODA

PALM TREE


PEAKS

PICNIC

PLAID

POINT

RED PAINT

REVERSE DESIGN

ROCK COMBO

SANTA FACE

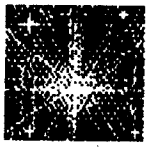
SCROLL

SHIP

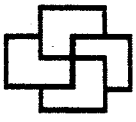
SHOWER1

SIGN

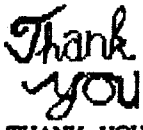
SKULL


SPARKLER

SPORTS CAR


SQ OVERLAP

STOCKING



THANK YOU

TREE

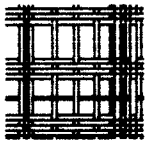
TULIPS

UNICORN

UP LOAD

USA ROCKET

WANTED


WEAVE

XMAS GIRL

A special thanks is due to George Pope of the Catalina Commodore Computer Club, Tucson, AZ for collecting the majority of these Print Shop pictures.

PRINT SHOP ART BY BJC — MCCC #274

The following is a visual reference chart of the Print Shop graphics created by Barbara Cramer for non-Commodore printers on MCCC disk # 274.

AIRPLANE

ANTIQUE TOP

ANTIQUE BOTTOM

BERT

BORDER.P

BUGS BUNNY

BUNNY

NEW BUNNY

CACTUS

CAT1

CAT2

CAT3

CB

CLAVIER

CORNER

CORNER2

COOKIE MONSTER

DONALD DUCK

ERNIE

GARFIELD

GARF.CANE

GARF.GUITAR

GARF.HEAD

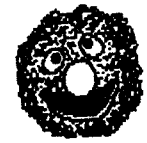
GARF.STAGE

GARF.SUN

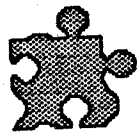
GARF.SWIM

GOOFY

GOOFY2


GROVER

HATS OFF


JIGSAW

LIBERTY BELL

LIBERTY 1

LINUS

LIPS

MCCC 1

MCCC LOGO

MICKEY

MICKEY2

MICKEY.WAVE

MINNIE

MORTARBOARD

NOTES

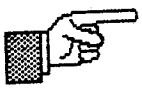
ODIE

OSCAR

PALM

PLUTO

PLUTO2


POINT RT

POINTSETTIA

RED BARON

RIBBON

SCHROEDER

SHELL

SNOOPY1

SNOOPY.DANCE

SNOOPY.PEN

SNOOPY.STAGE

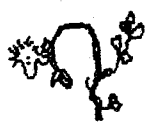
TEMPLE

TEXAS

USER

WAVES

WOODSTOCK


WOODSTOCK.TREE

Nobody Beats

Babbage's

SOFTWARE FOR THE HOME

The largest selection of home computer software !

message. System navigation is via a tree of menus; there's no expert or jump mode to speed your way once you're familiar with the network. In addition, you can't use the save buffer to capture chats or any other "people connection" functions.

The features of QuantumLink are, indeed, many. However, initially unique items, such as the on-line encyclopedia, have already been adopted by other info services. There are other feature defects, as well. For instance, tech ical problems hindered access to Comp-U- Store Online. Forums are conduced in on-line "auditoriums" that only hold 250 people (not many for a national outfit), and require advance "box office" reservations. At one point, a 9 PM event was delayed until 10 PM, but no notice to that effect was posted. In addition, the service confirmed a new reservation for an event that had already ended days earlier. Concerning downloadable previews of new commercial software, my friends were disappointed in the quality of the offerings.

The cost of QuantumLink turns out to be higher than expected. That $9.95 "all-you-can-eat" rate covers lots of "starch" but little "meat". All the "good" stuff costs extra--file transfers, chats, telegaming, software previews/exchanges, discussion forums, and Comp-U- Store Online are "supplementary" services. Worse yet, some of those items are quite slow or otherwise ladened with obstacles that swiftly increase your tab. For instance, downloads are not only slow, but the system fails to flag file lengths or otherwise hint at transmission time-- a factor that could well influence your decision to go for the swap in the first place. The calendar of forum events is not purged of outdated entries, meaning you are forced through a slow display of completed happenings prior to reaching new items. Having to climb that menu tree also eats up time and money. Accounting information may surprise you, too; one beta tester carefully timed a session at 15 minutes, only to find that he would have been charged for 1 hour and 58 minutes!

In fairness to QuantumLink, things can change for the better; the network has potential, but, in my view, needs major revision, including the abandonment of proprietary communications software. The folks at Quantum Computer Services, though not helpful, have been polite and responsive. I'm sure they will attract a devoted following, despite my own misgivings. However, not one of the beta testers I know will opt for continued service. For now, QuantumLink is not recommended.

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ATTENTION COMMODORE USER GROUPS: ON- LINE is available for publication in your newsletter. For details write to:

Paul J. Motise
6 Whetstone Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

NEW LIBRARY DISKS

CCCC MUSIC # 8
MCCC #414

MENU	SMALL WORLD	TO CTUG OF
	SPECIAL SONG	ORANGE COUNTY
SONGS FOLLOW		CALIFORNIA
	SWEET CHARIOT	FOR THE
AULD LANG SYNE	SYNTH.SONGS	CONTENTS OF
CLASSICAL-64	TEDDY'S SONG	THIS DISK
COMPUTER NOISE	################	################
DOWN OUR WAY	(C) 1985	ALL PROGRAMS
EL-SHADDAI	CCCC INC.	ON THIS DISK
	PO BOX 32548	ARE IN BASIC
JOSHUA	TUCSON, AZ.	-
LISTEN	85751-2598	LOAD AND RUN
MASTERPIECE	################	IN NORMAL WAY
MOONLIGHT SONATA	PUBLIC DOMAIN	OR USE MENU
MUSIC	LIBRARY DISK	LOADER
	FREE TO COPY	FIRST PROGRAM
MUSIC - J.B.	NOT TO SELL	################
MUSIC1	################	
SEND THE CLOWNS	THANK YOU	

PUB DOM TERMS
MCCC #272

LOAD ME FIRST	CBT/PETSCII	FIRSTDIAL3
CBTERM	CBTKEY	EAGLE-TERM
CBT.V45/DOC1	-- ----------	MITEYMOTERM
CBT.V45/DOC2	FIRST-TERM	MITEYMO.C1
CBTVTX/DOC	FIRSTTERM3	SPRINT
CBTVTX	FIRSTTERM3 BT	

REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS

MCCC NEWS REVIEWS THE LATEST SOFTWARE
COURTESY OF BABBAGE'S AND FEDERATED/VIDEOLAND

MOVIE MAKER
ELECTRONIC ARTS

Creative people usually do not recognize themselves because as they complete one project they are already 6 steps into the planning of at least one new project. Movie Maker is a program for creative people who enjoy working on a project that creates something unique from a blank screen.

Movie Maker will provide you with editing features to allow you to create your own animated feature of 300 frames. There are ample examples to study and borrow from as well as a birthday and Christmas sequence to finish with the name of your choice. There is also a "player" program which allows you to send your animated features to friends who do not own Movie Maker.

The animation program itself is complex and requires as much study as a good word processor. The manual is adequate but you will find yourself learning by trying rather than spending a lot of time reading tutorials. Practical hints are minimal and the overall manual is much to brief to fully explain the power of many commands.

If you are starting from scratch, you will need to draw a background scene and a shape table of all the animation sequences you wish to use. The space for each of these drawings is limited to one screen which may provide a challenge if you choose to animate a large object or character. The drawing commands are excellent including copy, mirror, zoom, fill, erase and restore (to correct a mistake). You may test your work as you go, format disks, save and load files.

Once the shape and background screens are ready, you will proceed to record the actual animation, one actor at a time. Six tracks are allowed and the "actors" may switch "character" sequences as often as needed. You may record and playback in any of nine speeds. While recording a sequence you move the actor with the joystick and, again, have a choice of speed, actually distance. In short, you have control over virtually everything.

The next step is adding a sound track. You have a choice of 9 sound effects or 9 pitches of organ-like sound. This is the weakest area of the program. I soon found myself wanting to merge my music files with the animation but no provision for this is apparent.

After many hours of work, you will arrive at the final step, smoothing to take out the flicker and merge seperate files into one finished product. You will also be given the choice of including opening and closing text screens which scroll vertically like the real thing. At this point you will realize how tedious and time consuming animation is but you will have a mini-movie that was conceived and created totally by your ingenuity.

While Movie Maker is not for everyone, it is an excellent tool for people who like to have control over all the elements of production. For only $28.90 (Babbage's) it is an excellent bargain.

JINGLE DISK
Thoughtware, Inc.

You better watch out; Santa Claus is coming to your computer. Jingle Disk is a two part program that is well worth its $8. 45 price tag (Babbage's). You will definately get your money's worth; all but 12 blocks of disk space has been used to create this interesting holiday package.

"Jingle Tunes" is a short story (or long greeting card) which employs 14 hires screens, 6 verses of poetry and 6 Christmas songs. While the animation is not highly sophisticated, the graphics and music are excellent.

"Holiday Greeting" allows you to print your own greeting card after supplying 'To: ' and 'From:' information. Check the back cover to see if your printer is supported by the program for there is no documentation inside! It printed well with my Gemini 10X but margins were not as

printed as pictured and will require some scissors to align the edges. Also, there is no provision for paper alignment.

While the program only allows you to print one screen, I discovered that 7 of the graphics files could be converted to Doodle and Print Shop (Screen Magic) by using the utility presented in the July issue of Ahoy! magazine (Print Shop to Bit Map Converter and Screen Magic to DOODLE! Converter, pp. 50, 88-89). This ability to alter and print the 7 best screens of the program make it a real bargain.

EASY AS ABC
Springboard Software, Inc.

EASY AS ABC is one of Springboard's Early Games Series for ages 3 to 6. It consists of five games that help children learn the letters of the alphabet, their sequence and upper and lower cases.

"Match Letters" develops letter recognition skills. "Dot To Dot" teaches alphabet sequences. "Leapfrog" and "Lunar Letters" also deal with sequences of 3 to 6 letters and "Honey Hunt" teaches upper and lower cases.

The programs are all educationally sound progressing from easy to more difficult levels. They all provide hints when a wrong answer is selected and they reward correct patterns with colorfully animated graphics. The instructions include a number of additional activities to explore learning both on and off the computer. The picture menus and slow moving cursor speed make this program easy for children to use and enjoy.

HEART OF AFRICA
Electronic Arts
Review by Laura Clements

Hiram Primm has died and left me all of his worldly goods if I find the lost tomb of Ahnk Ahnk. He further stipulated in his will that nothing will be left to his wife or two sons. With this rather strange beginning, I found myself wandering around in a native village in the HEART OF AFRICA.

The documentation promises madmen, hostile natives, and many misfortunes; these are only some of the wonderful things to come. The natives don't seem particularly restless, and I am not allowed to enter all of the mud huts. I do get into the weapons hut and the tool hut; none of the contents could be seen. I also got to enter the hut labeled "Pub". (A pub in an African native village?)

Like the popular 7 CITIES OF GOLD, this is an educational graphics adventure game. If anything, the artwork is even better, and the movements of the characters even smoother.

The mapwork is historically accurate, with over 30 cities and settlements to visit. The computer keeps an on- screen journal for you which records the most important clues for you to review later.

HEART OF AFRICA will take you a long time to play. Provisions for saving your progress are in the Pub. The save option will definitely be needed; the game will take a long time to play -- but will be well worth it.

SILENT SERVICE
Microprose Software

Silent Service is a World War II submarine simulation game staged in the South Pacific.

The game's outstanding features become evident at the time of loading. Unlike other strategic simulation games, the screens are very detailed, and the player can customize the game's complexity. Time scaling is included which ensures that actions and decisions are constantly required.

Silent Service provides a wide selection of historical scenarios that range from individual attacks to patrol missions; this adds to the challenge and fun of both the first-time user and the experienced strategist.

The few drawbacks that the game has are not even worth mentioning. The overall quality of is so superior to most simulation games, that I would highly recommend this game.

BUILD A BOOK
Scarborough System

In a child's world of television, VCR's, G.I. Joe and Barbie dolls and icon driven computer programs, it is comforting to know that someone is still interested in teaching the value of reading a book.

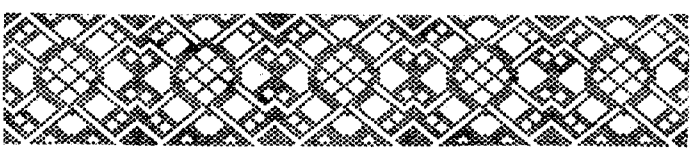
The BUILD A BOOK kit provides all the supplies you will need to create 2 personalized, full color, hard cover books for

children aged 2-12. It is very attractively packaged in a notebook that includes velcro fasteners and pockets for everything.

The program, itself, is not for children. A parent would best supply supervision of entering personalized data, proofreading and, especially, the process of printing the pages. When you are finished, your child will be able to enjoy a book created especially for him including details about his home, family, friends, school, birthday and pet. Information for many names may be stored on the disk, however, you will need additional supply packets to print more than 2 books.

The complete kit (including software) retails for $39.95. Additional book kits (no software) are available by mail and average $9. 95 per book with a shipping charge of $2.95. The titles available are "Adventures on the Riddle Planet", "The Greatest Circus Story Ever Told", "The Mystery of Scented Mountain" and The Holiday Dragon".

While the idea of printing a set of personalized books for my son is very appealing, I found that the program was no more innovative than the mail order companies which do the same thing and do not require you to sew your own binding. The program offers very little creativity on the part of the user and the finished product does not seem to justify the high cost in both time and money. Perhaps this would a good gift for children who have all the Cabbage Patch dolls or GoBots they need!



CAPTURE CARTRIDGE

By Jason-Ranheim
Review by Roger Ingersoll

After two months of waiting my CAPTURE CARTRIDGE finally arrived. I saw the advertisement in Computes Gazette that said this could save the computers RAM to disk. What does this mean?, Well first of all, NO more head knock due to copy protection on the disk. (I have had to have my disk drive re-aligned twice thanks to head knock.) This was the main selling point to me.

The instruction manual has a lot of technical references as to what the cartridge does. It also has a section on condensing RAM files, but more on this later. There is no need to fear if you don't understand all the technical matter. There is a step by step section as well.

"What does this thing do?" you ask. To put it simply, NOTHING, that is, until you push the CAPTURE BUTTON. Then a menu pops up and allows you to select your options. First you will preconfigure your RAM. This places HEX FF in every memory location in the computer. You are then returned to a reset computer. Load your program as you normally would. When the program gets to its main menu (or wherever it begins), press the CAPTURE BUTTON and up pops the menu again. You can now look at the RAM to see which sections have been used. This is where preconfiguring comes in handy. CAPTURE slices the RAM into 2K blocks and then looks at these blocks to see if there is anything besides HEX FF there. If there are only $FF's then that block is not used. If any byte is not $FF then the block is marked 'used'. When you select to make a disk, the used blocks are saved to disk along with the VIC, SID and other registers. Then a BOOT program is written. When completed, the disk contains upwards of 20 files. These files are the 2K block of RAM and memory registers. The instruction manual tells how to condense the RAM files into as few as one file. An enhancement program will soon be available to do this for you according to the manual.

CAPTURE will also (with additional hardware) create cartridges for the C- 64. I will not go into this since it is not yet available. The cartridge making capabilities are still being designed and a new ROM for the CAPTURE CARTRIDGE will be shipped (at no charge) when available.

CAPTURE works very well, I have only found a few programs that I could not successfully CAPTURE; these all used multiple files on disk and must boot up the various files during program execution. Also, The new program will not load if a printer is turned on while the program is loading (you can turn on a printer after loading). After a CAPTURE, the load time decreases measurably. One program that normally took 4 minutes to load from disk now loads in 55 seconds.

CAPTURE is one of the best items to appear for the C-64 this year!

CHAPTER NEWS

FT. WORTH

The Ft. Worth Chapter elected officers for 1986. They are:

President--David Huebner
Vice Pres.--Joe Ostrokol
Librarian--Don Stevens
Secretary/Reporter--Jill and Gary Campbell
Treasurer--Jack Hagemeyer

Glenn Baird gave an interesting demonstration of his plotter wedge, which adds a powerful set of plotting commands to Basic. Glenn has generously donated a program disk and documentation to the library. Thanks, also, to Ellen Triplett and Howard Mayer for reviewing library disks at our last meeting.

The Fort Worth Chapter will not have a meeting in December. Instead, we will attend the club Christmas meeting. To avoid having to change meeting days in the future, we voted to meet the second Saturday of each month, beginning in January. Mary Louise Hagemeyer

ARLINGTON

The proposed slate of officers for 1986 are:

President	Dave Rogers
Vice President	Lonnie Davis
Treasurer	Clem Countess
Librarian	Ken Bruen
Sec/Reporter	Jonathan Riba

The December meeting will be 10:00 AM, 14 December at the Downtown Arlington Library. It will be an open meeting covering Christmas gift ideas for Commodore users. Notify Dave Rogers of the software you plan to demonstrate. The meeting will also include refreshments. Drinks will be supplied by the chapter and snacks will be provided by the membership. -Jonathan Riba

FT. WORTH NIGHT

The Fort Worth Night Chapter will not hold a December meeting, but will be combining our meeting with the club Christmas meeting.-Bruce Umbreit

HURST-EULESS-BEDFORD

The HEB elected officers for 1986 are:

President	Roger Hoggard
Vice President	Joe Patton
Sec/Treasurer	Bruce Nelson
Reporter	Nancy Sparks
Librarian	Tony Velez
Asst/Librarian	Cheryl Howard
C64 Leader	Roy Baker
	David Rye
	Laura Clements

The demo of BBS Graphics at our last meeting, subtitled 'A Comedy of Errors' proved once again that Murphy's Law will never grow old. Perhaps we shall all try again at a later date.

GRAND PRAIRIE

The following people were elected to office for the coming year:

President	Mac McClure
Vice President	John Brodie
Treasurer	Joe Peters
Sec/Reporter	Mr. & Mrs. Frank Corlett
Librarian	Gus Hoehn
Asst/Librarian	R. L. Taylor

The chapter will meet at the Grand Prairie Public Library, Sat., Dec. 14 at 1: 30 PM. While there will be no special program, everyone should come prepared to boost their kind of program for the coming year. We are also interested in your views on public domain and copyrighted software. What should we be doing next year and how can we best accomplish it?

The Tuesday night session would fall on Christmas Eve, so we will forgo the pleasure and wish everyone a Merry Christmas.-Ray Sloan

Candidates for The Executive Board Of Directors 1986

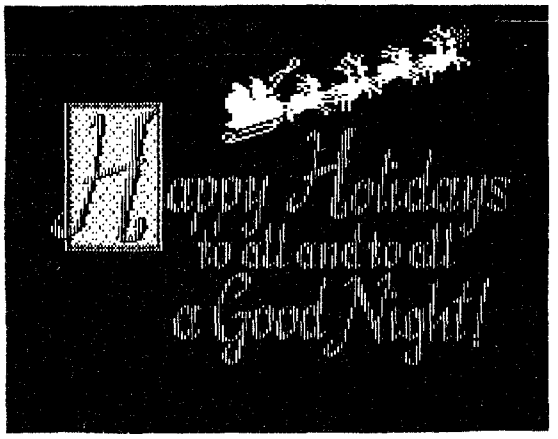
These people have been nominated by the current Board of Directors:

President:	Ray Montoro
Vice President:	Don Bennett
Treasurer:	Bill Raecke
Secretary:	Harold Williams
Newsletter Editors:	Laura Clements
	Barbara Cramer
Librarian:	Tony Velez
Educational Chrmn.:	Garry Wordelman
	Mary Louise Hagemeyer

THE MAGIC EGG

By Barbara Cramer

The Ft. Worth Museum of Science is currently presenting a 15 minute film, The Magic Egg, following their feature show, Genesis, in the Omni Theater. The Magic Egg is a montage of graphics and sound which was created and performed by computers all across the country. While the filming took place in front of various monitors, the large screen format of the Omni Theater makes it an experience computer buffs, especially, will enjoy. Presented with no narration, the film is particularly appealing to the imagination. Try not to miss it. It is exceptional.



NEW SOFTWARE

Babbage's has just received the following programs for the C64:

Flight Simulator
Scenery Disks $16. 95
Ultima IV $44.96
Fight Night $25.45
Hardball $25.45
Kung Fu Master $29.70

Check out their supply of colored paper/envelopes for your holiday needs.

MCCC NEWS

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